

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street
Easton, MD 21601
October 17, 2018
Continued to October 25, 2018 and further
Continued to November 21, 2018

Present:

Board

Joseph H. Secrist, President	(R)
Walter Black	(D)
Susan MacKinnon	(D)
Richard B. Bulman	(R)
Wadella Thomas	(R)

Staff

Jeri Cook, Election Director

Board Attorney

Philip Cronan

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on October 17, 2018 in Conference Room # One at the Board office indicated above. Prior to the start on the meeting, Deputy Clerk of the Court, Kathi Dulin Duvall, administered the oath of office to Mr. Secrist, Mr. Black, Ms. MacKinnon, Ms. Thomas and Mr. Bulman as members of the Board of Canvassers as well as to Mr. Cronan as attorney to the Board of Canvassers. Following this, Mr. Secrist called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes of September 19, 2018

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the draft minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2018, a copy of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Ms. MacKinnon noted that a previous draft of these minutes had specified the polling location where early closing was reported. She asked that the polling place name be included in the minutes. With that change, Ms. MacKinnon moved approval of the minutes of the open portion of the August 15, 2018 meeting. Ms. Bulman seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Changes to Agenda/Approval of Agenda

Mr. Secrist asked that we add Polling Place Assignments to the agenda under New Business. With that addition, Mr. Black moved approval of the amended agenda. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Election Director's Report

Ms. Cook reported the following:

- An updated calendar of events for the year, including the dates in red at which the board members presence is expected, was handed out. On election day, the board agreed to select the precincts to be audited at 2:00 p.m. following the Early Voting canvass instead of at 8:00 p.m.
- Ms. Cook has spoken to the county regarding the part time salary expenses that should have been charged to last budget year for Re-elect category. The county has agreed to put the funds for this year back into our budget.
- Regarding school closing on election day, Ms. Cook polled those counties that are not required to close schools on election day. Of those counties permitted to keep schools open, Dorchester, Kent, Worcester schools are all closed. Mr. Secrist reported that Calvert schools are closed. Caroline County used one school for voting this year. Caroline and Talbot are the only counties in the state that use schools for voting where the schools are not closed.
- Ms. Cook held an open house for judges on October 13. About 20 judges attended.
- L&A of the voting machines was completed. L&A testing of the Poll Books will be October 22 and 23. Ms. MacKinnon asked that at least one board member from each party attend the L&A testing and the public demonstration next time.
- Supply verification has been completed.
- The Nursing home absentee voting at Bayleigh Chase was a success.

Board Attorney's Report

Mr. Cronan participated in a conference call with the State Board attorney and Ms. Nikki Charlson regarding issues at the St. Michaels polling place. He will send a written note to the board members.

Old Business

- a. Budget FY2019

The board reviewed the financial statements and no comments were made.

- b. Review Invoices

After reviewing the invoices, no comments were made.

c. Calendar of upcoming election activities

This topic was discussed under the Election Director's Report

d. County Bulletins

There was no discussion of items in the County Bulletins

e. Polling Places

- i. St. Michaels High School – Regarding the issue of a School Board employee removing political signs at this location on election day during the Primary, Mr. Cronan has been in communications with the attorney for the School Board, the Attorney General's Office and State Election Board staff. Mr. Secrist reported that he had a conversation with the county Superintendent of Schools, Kelly Griffith. Dr. Griffith has sent an email to Mr. Cronan with a copy to the facilities manager at St. Michaels High School which appears to assure compliance with state law regarding the placement of political signs on election day. The election office has also arranged to have a large electronic sign place on Seymour Avenue directing voters to the proper entry to the parking. This should help alleviate the potential safety issues while the school is open on election day. Mr. Secrist offered to go to St. Michaels prior to the opening of polls on election day to confirm that there is compliance with the agreed upon solution.
 - ii. Trappe Firehouse – Ms. Cook reported that a County LBE Technician will be assigned to this location all day on election day to assist the Chief Judges in complying with election regulations. Ms. Cook has given the Chief Judges directions regarding signage placement and times they must be on display. Mr. Bulman offered to go to this location near the close of the polls to monitor the closing procedures.
- f. Water leak in warehouse – Ms. Cook reported that the county has inspected the roof above the area of the warehouse where election equipment is stored. They have made some repairs to the second floor which appears to have stopped the leak into our space.
- g. Legislation for school closing – This board is interested in enactment of statewide legislation requiring that schools be closed on election day to assure local boards of elections that schools will be available to serve as polling places in a safe manner. Our local legislators are mixed in their support for such legislation. Mr. Secrist spoke with Stuart Harvey, the chairman of the Legislative Committee of MAEO. After discussion of the legislation and how to proceed, Mr. Bulman moved that the board request legislation statewide closing schools for students

on election day and that letters be written to our local legislators with copies sent to MAEO President and the members of the MAEO Legislative Committee. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Ms. MacKinnon offered to draft a letter of transmittal to the legislators and asked for input from the other board members. She will circulate her draft to everyone for comment and ask that Mr. Cronan prepare a final version for signature by Mr. Secrist.

- h. Election Judges – Ms. Cook provided an updates list of judges for review by the board. She has 5 judges available for substitutes, if needed, on election day.

New Business

Polling Place Assignments – Mr. Secrist expressed concern about the number of judges scheduled for Early Voting. Ms. Cook has schedule 16 per day. Mr. Secrist thought a lesser number is possible for the weekend since voter turnout then is lower than on weekdays. He estimated a savings could be achieved of over \$5,400. Ms. Cook agreed to try that, provided that if the weekend numbers turn out to be higher she may need to add positions back.

Mr. Secrist also expressed concern about the balance by party in the assignment of judges at several locations. He noted that on election day there are 11 Democrat judges but on 7 Republican judges. He made some suggested about reassigning judges at Oxford, and Cordova to obtain more balance. Other board members were not as concerned as Ms. Secrist. Regarding the state law requiring a balance by party at each polling place, Ms. Cook presented a letter from the Attorney General's Office providing guidance where a balance is not possible. No action was taken regarding Mr. Secrist's concerns.

Confirmation of next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Board will be on November 21, 2018 at 9:30 AM.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Bulman departed.

Closed Session

Ms. MacKinnon moved that the board go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Whereupon the board went into closed session at 12:40 PM.

During the Closed Session, the board voted to recess at 2:20 PM and to reconvene in Closed Session at 10:30 AM on October 25, 2018 in the same conference room. On October 25, 2018 the board reconvened in Closed Session at 10:50 AM. During that session, the board voted to again recess at 12:10 PM and reconvene on November 21, 2018 at 9:00 AM at the same location.

Out of Closed Session

On November 21, 2018, at 9:10 AM in Conference Room # One at the Board office indicated above.

Present:

Board

Joseph H. Secrist, President	(R)
Walter W. Black	(D)
Richard B. Bulman	(R)
Susan MacKinnon	(D)
Wadella Thomas	(R)

Public

Walt Johnson

Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

Mr. Secrist reported that during the closed session the board discussed personnel matters concerning a former employee, salary matters concerning the Election Director, and approved the minutes of the closed session held on September 19, 2018.

Mr. Secrist also mentioned that the board will be submitting a request for a budget increase to the county.

Adjournment

Mr. Black moved adjournment of the meeting. Ms. MacKinnon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:31 AM.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,



 Joseph H. Secrist, Jr., President



 Richard B. Bulman, Secretary